PORTRAITS FROM THE NATION'S CAPITAL

Silent Coolidge, Witty Knox

WASHINGTON CLOSE-UPS—By Edward G. Lowry. Houghton-Mifflin Company.

LITTLE stories about big men wouldn't be a bad title for this elaboration of a national reporter's notebook. Lowry is a good sketch artist and knows how to pick the few lines that suggest the whole character. He applies his method to a score of leaders—about as varied a lot of men as could be strung together. Here is a hint of Harding, drawn simply from his choice of words:

"The second impression I brought away is that the President has, at least, two pet words that he uses constantly. They are 'becoming' and 'seemly.' I think it will be observed of him, as he becomes a more intimate and accustomed apparition to all of us, that he cannot talk very long on any subject without using one of these two words and, perhaps, both of them. I present this fact to the Freudians. Let them make what they can of it."

The author has a happy way of hitting off his subject with a line of poetry or an old proverbial phrase: "Gaily the troubadour" heads the Bryan chapter. And for contrast here is the silent Coolidge:

"He is close, close, close, and as detached as a villa site. His letters are even briefer than his spoken words. One that I know about consists merely of one word and the initials, 'C. C.' If this is a fair sample, and I assume that it is, when his life and letters come to be published they can be issued on one octavo postal card.

"He didn't seem ill at ease or embarrassed or tongue tied. He was just still. Silent upon a peak in Darien is no name for it. He gave no appearance of being about to say something presently. It was an absolute calm. Old Ironsides at anchor lay in the harbor of Mahon. The waves to sleep had gone—that sort of thing. Not a leaf stirring. It was impressive—and he so small. A big man can be as monosyllabic as he pleases, but more is expected of slight men."

Lowry found it hard to gather different anecdotes of Senator Hiram Johnson. Everybody summed him up in one sentence, "He's a fighter!" But here are a few more points:

"Johnson has one outstanding endearing quality. He doesn't value money. 'Why, if we didn't watch him,' one of his associates told me, 'he would start East with only six dollars in his pocket.' Simply he looks upon money as a medium of exchange and not as something to be hoarded and sweated over. His personal habits are of the simplest. He spends his evenings at home or at the movie shows. He is perhaps the most inveterate movie fan in the country to-day. He knows the names of all the movie actors and actresses and can tell you what parts they have played.

"He told me that he started going to the movies as a refuge. The picture theatres being dark, he could spend an hour or two without being seen and pestered. They offered a means of escape from importunities. But now he goes to them because he likes them. Also he is a domino player of renown—'the best domino player in the world,' a Sacramento friend told me gravely."

Of Secretary Mellon the author says, "He will take care of our money. He has had experience with his own. He doesn't throw it away, neither does he waste it by trying to save it at the wrong time, as this story shows:

"It appears that one day the Cabinet had under discussion what should be done with one of the great war industries plants. The immediate problem was whether twelve or fifteen millions should be spent in putting it in condition or whether it should be abandoned and salvaged. One after another of the men around the table gave his judgment and opinion. Mr. Mellon sat quiet. Presently the President, at the head of the table, turned toward him and said:

"'But we haven't heard from the secretary of the Treasury. What does he think about this proposal? I should like to have his views.'

"Mr. Mellon was hesitant. Then he spoke up in his low, quiet, dry voice. The matter was not exactly in his department; he had not given the problem any study; he was not familiar with all the conditions and the full situation; it was a question of some importance; he did not wish to be understood as giving his final opinion unless he had opportunity to go into the whole matter more fully, but he thought he could indicate possibly what his final judgment might be, if allowed to tell what he had done in a somewhat similar and personal case. He owned a war plant that stood him about fifteen or sixteen millions, and just the other day the question had come up whether to spend that much more money on it or to wipe it off. 'I told 'em to scrap it,' concluded Mr. Mellon.

"'Well, sir,' said the man who was telling the story, 'the discussion in the Cabinet ended right there. The Cabinet felt that if Mr. Mellon could afford to scrap his plant the United States Government could afford to follow the same course. When the Secretary of the Treasury does participate in a discussion he usually nails it down.'"

Secretary Hughes likes his present job. And his exterior shows the change in his mood. If a gay Secretary of State is unimaginable, at least he is far from gloomy.

"It is an entirely new Hughes. The big, black, formidable spade beard is gone, and there is now a soft, white, rounded one, a mere buttonhole bouquet of a beard in place of the old impenetrable privet hedge. Gone, too, is the old long tailed coat and the high, shiny black hat. He is a great surprise to those persons who believed that he was icebound eight months in the year. As a matter of record Mr. Hughes is more friendly and flexible and easy in his demeanor than he has ever shown himself before."

And this anecdote from another Administration is recalled of Senator Knox, who died while this book was in press:

"He was one of the few men (Elihu Root was another) who 'talked back' to Mr. Roosevelt. There used to be a story current that one day when the President asked the advice of the Attorney-General on a problem that was then pressing, Mr. Knox replied gravely:

"'I am sorry that you have asked for my opinion, because up to the present time your proceedings have been free from any taint of law.'"

An Editor of the Old Herald

NEWS HUNTING ON THREE CONTINENTS. By Julius Chambers. New York: Mitchell Kennerley.

THE veteran of twenty city rooms and 10,000 assignments is turning the leaves of the crumbling yellow file of the newspaper that first printed his name above his stories. At his side stands the shining novice who still treasures his stick long clippings and dreams of killing copy readers.

The veteran points to a story bizoned on a front page of many years ago and recites the events. "I was just getting ready to go home, when . . ." They are events that were once engrossing and perhaps of great moment, but now, like the paper on which they are printed, they are in danger of becoming dust between the fingers.

Mr. Chambers calls back the days when old news was new. And as the stories of stories are told the narrator chinks the crevices with little anecdotes of the famous men of the profession: James Gordon Bennett Joseph Pulitzer, Whitelaw Reid. As the spears of sunlight slip from wall to wall and finally disappear out the endmost window the listening novice realizes that he has a long way to go.

Although Julius Chambers's book is the story of the day's work in a newspaper "shop," its readers will not be limited to those who write copy. Old New Yorkers will be interested in the revival of ancient front pages which constitutes the major portion of the book—ancient politics, scandal and crime. The city room soldier of the present day may compare the tales told by Chambers with those he has already collected. The news of one generation repeats that of the generation before—though Chambers had no world war to chronicle.

Julius Chambers was managing editor of the HERALD and right hand man of James Gordon Bennett, the younger. He founded *The Paris Herald*. Later through a misunderstanding he severed his connection with the *Herald* and went to work for Joseph Pulitzer as managing editor of the *World*. Whether as reporter or editor he gave satisfaction. Both Bennett and Pulitzer had implicit confidence in him. Chambers could have gone as high as he chose.

One of his chief contributions was the "freak" news story and the "freak" headline. Dana also had a great fondness for "freaks" as circulation builders, but it is possible that both men became aware of the value of the idea at the same time, or at least during the same period.

Many of the anecdotes are interesting and well told. Determined to enter journalism, Chambers, the youth, set out, and sent his card in to Horace Greeley in the office of the *Tribune*.

"Mr. Greeley," he stammered. "I came to ask a place on your newspaper. You are a trustee of Cornell University, and I have been graduated there . . ."

"I'd a damned sight rather you had graduated at a printer's case!" was the outburst, as the editor swung back to his desk.

Of his meeting with Mr. Bennett, Jr., he tells the following story: 'Far apart from any anchored craft we noticed a swimmer, whose head and shoulders were moving at racing speed. His brown hair was cropped short; his shapely head turned now and again, as, using the English stroke, he vigorously reached with his right arm. The skill of the swimmer indicated the athlete. His face we did not see.

"A few minutes later the swimmer, who proved to be Capt. Bennett, came on deck over the side—a tall, lithe man, robed only in nature's pink morocco, and covered with sparkling drops of brine. He extended a hand not less hospitable because it bore the ocean's chill."

Interesting to present day newspaper folk is the anecdote which seems to indicate that book reviewing was not always in high repute. "The next conflict with a member of the staff occurred when a man engaged to write editorial matter was asked to review a new biography of Shelley. He swelled up and said that he had not been hired to do reviewing—considered it 'beneath his dignity.'"

Ireland's Case and That of Colonies

THE MAKING OF A REPUBLIC. By Kevin R. O'Shiel. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

IN the days of Louis XV. the French encyclopædists evaded the censor by describing sufferings of Oriental or fantastic, nonexistent peoples which coincided with the woes of the French peasantry. The hoax was apparent even to the sand blind. To-day Mr. O'Shiel with a censor to evade has turned out a history of the American Revolution written so as to serve as propaganda for the cause of Sinn Fein in Ireland. The propaganda is level with the text so that for some readers the book will seem, and for the most part is, history pure and simple. Those who are sensitive, however, will get the author's shaft whenever the string twangs. What this book does with early American history is hallowed by tradition, yet somehow one cannot help feeling that it is in a small way irreverence.

Mr. O'Shiel points out parallels between the struggles of the American colonies and Ireland to-day in the course of a brief introduction. In the foisting of British officers and appointees upon the colonies, in laws of coercion, and in reprisal by boycott exist, according to the author, and as a matter of fact an exact parallel to conditions in Ireland. The Tory menace is likened to the Ulster difficulty, a point upon which many will disagree.

Although the stress is laid on such facts as coercion, boycotting and the Irish names of some of the volunteers, the history of the Revolution is told in clear, straightforward fashion. The concluding chapter entitled "Ireland's Part in the Revolution" pins many a shining flower to the lapel of Ireland and her sons.

"From the start of hostilities able bodied Irishmen joined up in thousands," he writes. "They were the backbone of the insurgent army. Enthusiastic, disciplined, bearing terrible privations with stoical cheerfulness, they were at all times the only regiments which Washington could thoroughly trust.

"A hundred and fifty Irishmen answered the 'Minute' call at Lexington. At Bunker Hill, the first regular battle of the Revolution, O'Briens, O'Haras, Phelans, Quins, Donagheys, Dempseys, Donnellys, Farrells, Doyles, Duffys, Connollys, resisted the British onslaught with desperate valor; and the same can be said of every other battle of the campaign."

The author quotes the testimony of the Tory speaker of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, Mr. Galloway, given before the House of Commons in 1879, in response to a question as to the composition of the rebel army, as follows:

"The names and places of their nativity being taken down I can answer the question with precision. There were scarcely a quarter natives of America; about a half Irish; the other quarter were English and Scotch."

In addition Mr. O'Shiel shows that the Irish played a role in naval and civil affairs, and that the Irish element in the British army deserted in large numbers shortly after their arrival.

No Prohibition For the Elephant

GUNS OF THE GODS. By Talbot Mundy. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company.

MR. TALBOT MUNDY has not quite attained to Kipling's literary mastery, but he has perhaps a keener insight into the native because he has more sympathy. "Guns of the Gods" tells about the youth of the Princess Yasmini and her escape from the plots of Gungadhura, the Maharaja of Sialpore. Mr. and Mrs. Blaine, American mining people, were involved in the net of intrigue and were a contrast to the less subtle British officials who were almost unconscious of the intricate maze of plot and counterplot in the Rajput world which they administered. Sir Roland Samson, the Commissioner who figures in the story, is almost like a figure in one of Sir Henry Johnston's books, but Tom Tripe, the white soldier who administered the military force of Sialpore, is like one of the soldiers of Kipling.

When we think of the magic of India we always picture elephants, and Talbot Mundy has not forgotten to introduce Akbar, the most magnificent of pachyderms, whose fondness for whiskey and subsequent misconduct were responsible for one of Yasmini's narrow escapes.

"My Maiden Effort," edited by Gelett Burgess and collected by the Authors' League of America to aid their fund for needy authors, is issued by Doubleday, Page & Co. The book contains the personal confessions of the first literary experiences of some twenty-five members of the League. Many of them are amusing histories of early attempts at the writing game. Ellis Parker Butler confesses that for his first magazine story he was paid fifty cents—all in post cards. George Ade wrote his first literary effort about a basket of potatoes. Stewart Edward White asked cash for his first story for fear the editor would change his mind and stop payment on his check.

Ursula Was Certainly Casual

URSULA TRENT. By W. L. George. Harper & Brothers.

THE wages of sin, according to Mr. W. L. George, is marriage. Ursula Trent, the pretty young woman who wanders so casually through the pages of his new novel of that name, begins her life of scarlet by making love to a married man. After this, of course, nothing is left but the downward path, so Ursula leaves her ancestral home and Victorian parents and wanders down to London, where among other things she drinks too much champagne, gives herself to a man just to find out what it's like, and ultimately goes to live with a young Apollo whose wife won't divorce him. After exactly 352 pages of this sinful life Ursula leaves the young Apollo and marries a most upstanding member of the community. He knows all about her past, even the fact that she almost had a baby, but he doesn't mind a bit.

"Of course," he tells Ursula, "I'd rather it had been my child. But then . . . if you hadn't gone through all you have you wouldn't be what you are."

All of which leads straight to two conclusions. First of all, why not sin? Secondly, "Ursula Trent" is in danger of being suppressed. A book, according to the suppressors, can contain as much sin as it wants, if only the wages adhere to tradition. But Ursula didn't suffer, she wasn't even faintly tinged with remorse.

The story is long, rather straggling, and not especially brilliant. The W. L. George who wrote "Ursula Trent" does not seem to be, in style at least, the W. L. George who wrote "A Bed of Roses." Ursula Trent, in spite of the fact that she is writing the story herself, does not live for the reader as Victoria Fulton did. Perhaps it is the very fact that the story is written in the first person that makes for awkwardness, but the awkwardness is there.

The same spirit, however, that animated "A Bed of Roses" is evinced in the new book. Mr. George's greatest charm, and the greatest charm of all the women he writes about, is their delightful casualness. One grows so weary of sinning ladies who repent—surely there must be some sinning ladies, equally interesting, who do not repent. Perhaps, like Ursula, they cease sinning because the thing they want can now be obtained without bothering to sin.

"It's so convenient to be married," murmurs Ursula's sister, Isabel, who being more practical, married first and sinned after.

"Now, Isabel," replies Ursula, flippantly, "don't thrust any confidences on me. I'm a respectable woman."

"Quite so. Reformed rakes are always dragons of virtue." This does not upset Ursula in the least. Although Mr. George did not mention it, a distinct giggle is heard here.

"You're being quite rude," is Ursula's only objection, "and were you not a dragon of virtue before you were married? Might I not say that a reformed dragon . . ."

This bit of dialogue is characteristic. The characters in this book are not distinguished, particularly, save for their wonderful casualness. Casualness, if only it were recognized, is the keynote of this generation. Girls like Ursula, girls from good families, with the best traditions, actually do the things that Ursula does, like Ursula, without feeling smirched. It is not because fundamentally they are any different from girls who dare less and suffer more. It is because they are casual, have a simple set of values and do not muddle issues with sentimentality.

"Ursula Trent" is a remarkable book in this one respect. Not once does it, nor its heroine, make a dramatic gesture. Ursula takes from life everything she can, gives what she must, and has no regrets. Many women will read about her enviously.

MARIAN SPITZER.

Elizabeth Newport Hepburn, whose new novel, "The Wings of Time" (Stokes), has just been published, is a New York writer whose girlhood, like that of her heroine, was passed in Washington, D. C. This is her first novel.

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Albert Bigelow Paine in a letter to Harper & Brothers writes that he will probably pass another winter in Switzerland, renewing his struggles with the French language and preparing some articles for the magazines. Mr. Paine is now making a motor trip along the war front in the same automobile which figured in his recent book, "The Car That Went Abroad."

Book Notes From Germany

THE flaming dog days of this amazing summer emptied Berlin of every one whose purse was long enough to enable him to contemplate with equanimity the exorbitant railway fares and still more exorbitant hotel bills. The theatres have devoted themselves to light opera and frothy comedy; only the Great Playhouse (*Grosses Schauspielhaus*). Reinhardt's huge theatre built out of the old circus, has thundered and roiled to the rough music of Hauptmann's epic "Weavers." Hauptmann's lesser rival as senior dramatist, Sudermann, has opened the autumn dramatic season ahead of time with his *"Notruf"* (Cry for Help), which the critics find meretricious and artificial.

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The Prussian Minister of Instruction issued orders that whereas all countries accessible to European culture were celebrating this year the 600th anniversary of Dante's death, all higher schools were to pay particular attention to the work of the great poet. "It seems now more than ever necessary to cultivate the moral seriousness and the strong sense of justice embodied in the personality of Dante."

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The ceremonial in honor of the Dante sexcentenary in the National Theatre was crowned by a very fine speech from Prof. Adolf von Harnack, from which a little of the conclusion might be quoted:

"Outcast and exiled, in want and misery, Dante remained true to his native soil and lived from its breath. He spoke always as a Florentine, and as such to all humanity. Because he was the truest possible Italian, he became in course of time comprehensible to the entire western world. For the highest that a nation creates, and this only, is supra-national, and rouses all mankind. Thus real patriotism and true humanity belong inseparably to one another."

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The publishing firm of E. A. Seemann in Leipzig has a cyclopean project in view—a library of art history in individual presentations. There are to be 500 volumes with 10,000 illustrations. Dr. Hans Tietze, the well known Viennese art critic, is to edit this vast work. Each little book will contain twenty characteristic reproductions and a short paper by an expert on the particular subject treated. The more important subjects naturally receive appropriate space—thus Rembrandt, divided into creative periods, will occupy six volumes. The first ten volumes include one on Vincent van Gogh, on Japanese Architecture, on the great Munich naturalist-painter, Wilhelm Leibl, on the Picture in Old Egypt, &c. The programme to be followed embraces the history of art in all places and at all times.

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Prof. Ostwald, the famous chemist and ethical teacher of Leipzig, is to launch a magazine, *Die Farbe* (Colour), which will be something new in theme and form. Every article which goes to make up the magazine will be bound up separately and laid loosely in the cover. Libraries and private people who wish to keep and catalogue some particular article will thus be able to do so without injury to other articles or to the magazine as a whole. The everyouthful old savant has another new idea. He would abolish the months and days in his calendar. He considers that mere numeration from 1 to 365 suffices for all purposes, since all the world knows that on day 100 the trees begin to spring into leaf, on day 200 the harvest begins, and so forth. A professional idea, savoring too much of aglebraic formulas to please the normal human mind, and the more strange coming from the great chemist, who has always shown considerable feeling for poetry in his science and his religion of science.

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Alfred Doblin, who is regarded as one of the leaders of the new prose, gave a remarkable lecture during the meeting of the German Authors' League. This has now been published in pamphlet form and demands of the State "interest in the art life of the nation, understanding for the development of the new feeling of responsibility, free play for all spiritual forces, respect for the achievements of the writer conscious of his responsibility." The duties of the writer toward the State are summed up by Doblin as "Responsibility, forsightedness, quietude. These will achieve for him a new dignity in the State." Doblin's lecture, while critical even of his own profession, is full of that inner glow which characterizes his writings.

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The Deutsche Bucherei in Leipzig has now opened its doors to the general public. This huge and stately semicircular building, shimmering white and decorated with beautiful sculptures, is used to house all books printed in Germany since 1913. Books are not lent, but must be read in the large reading room, which contains 180 seats and accommodation for 10,000 books of reference. There is also a magazine room, where 3,000 German periodicals lie awaiting readers, and a large room for maps and portfolios. The architectural plan of the library is such that extensions twice as large as the original building can be made without injury to the harmony of the design, and the heads of this institution reckon that these will infallibly become necessary.

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Einstein's theory of relativity as a film! This certainly sounds as if intended for a planetary joke. Nevertheless a solemn conclave of professors has seriously announced the preparation of such a film, to bear the title "Foundations of the Theory of Relativity." The professors, Dr. Otto Buek and Prof. Nicolai, Dr. Laemmel of Zurich and Prof. Fanta of Prague, declare that results of abstract thought which formerly could be presented only by means of obscure mathematical formulas may now be presented simply and comprehensively by means of the film. Clearly comprehensible? Ah, yes perhaps what professors regard as so! With us seeing will be believing, if not comprehending.

ETHEL TALBOT SCHEFFAUEP